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A POSSIBLE FIELD FOR WORK BY THE SECTIONS

There was an unusually interesting incident of the annual meeting of the Iowa Section at Mason City in October. This city has been growing rapidly and has pressing need of the solution of several water supply problems. It possesses a keen, active Chamber of Commerce, like so many other thriving communities in the Central States. Such a body is usually representative of the substantial taxpayers of the city, who naturally wish to have their tax money spent so as to produce the largest useful returns. One of the largest individual investments of a city is usually that in its system of water works. Such a plant is essentially a business proposition, and should be administered in accordance with the best business principles. Consequently, the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Mason City decided that the presence of a large number of water works managers as their guests afforded an opportunity to learn something about this particular kind of business by discussing some of its features with the visitors. Whether the directors learned anything of value to them, is for them to say, but the incident in itself suggests an important thought.

The various sections of the Association comprise men who are devoting their time and energies to the most important utility business in a city. It is a business requiring technical knowledge to ensure a supply that is safe to use and to provide a plant which will furnish that supply at the minimum price consistent with sound financial administration. It is also a big retail business, probably the biggest in the city, which demands good business methods of management. In short, the average water works proposition, presented properly to a Chamber of Commerce, should appear at once to such a body as something directly in its line, something to cherish and foster, to protect against injurious political interference and short sighted, ill-conceived policies and to back up with the collective weight of the business men of the community when it needs such help. The questions naturally arise: Have we tried to secure the support of these influential semi-public organizations? If we have not, how can we do so?

The writer has not given this subject enough thought to suggest an answer to either question. But he is convinced, in view of the influence that has been exerted upon public affairs by the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, the Cleveland Engineers' Society, the Engi-

neering Association of Nashville and the Iowa Engineering Society, to mention only a few instances, that the local Sections, backed by the parent body, can give a most helpful service in awakening a general appreciation of the financial and administrative importance of water works. If that recognition can be won, if water works problems can be left to water works specialists for solution, as a matter of course, the country will take a long step forward in the administration of public business. It is good to have the press with one, but it is best to have the hearty backing of the substantial commercial interests of a community. That backing can probably be obtained in many instances by demonstrating to these local Chambers of Commerce the importance of the water supply business which furnishes them with one of the essentials for their daily life, as well as protection for their property and livelihood.

JACK J. HINMAN, JR.

STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR WATER METERS

At the annual convention of the New England Water Works Association held in September, 1916, a paper was presented by R. J. Thomas entitled "A suggestion that the Association appoint a committee to prepare standard specifications for water meters." In this paper Mr. Thomas pointed out that there was then no specification available under which meters could satisfactorily be purchased on open competition, and attention was directed to the inadequacy of the comparatively few specifications which had been used up to that time. As a result of this paper a resolution was adopted which read as follows:

That the association appoint a committee to investigate the desirability of formulating meter specifications, and to standardize the nomenclature of meter parts.

Pursuant to this resolution a committee of eight was appointed by the New England Water Works Association, Charles W. Sherman, Boston, Mass., being chairman, and the writer one of the members.

Up to the termination of the World War very little was accomplished in the preparation of such specifications. Shortly after the armistice was signed, James A. Tilden, vice-president and general manager of the Hersey Meter Manufacturing Company, advised that the meter manufacturers' exchange, which includes all